PSBA Standards *for* Effective School Governance

Pennsylvania School Boards Association

To promote student growth and achievement, an effective school board…

Standard

1. Advocates for a thorough and efficient system of public education by:

Indicator

a. Promoting public education as a keystone of democracy.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board demonstrate to the community the relationship between democracy and education?

ii) How do board members balance the need to represent the electorate with the need to lead the district forward on behalf of children?

iii) How does the board create effective media relationships that reinforce the value of public education?

iv) How does the board include student representation or participation at board meetings?

v) How often do members of the board speak to or participate with community organizations?

Indicator

b. Engaging and promoting community support by seeking input, building support networks and generating action.

Benchmarks

i) To what extent has the community been engaged in or involved with our schools based on adopted policies and practices?

ii) How does the board engage community members to build community understanding and support of public education and the school district?

iii) How has the board ensured that the district has a proactive and cohesive communications plan based on issues in the schools and the community?

iv) How have the board's actions and attitudes elicited community trust and respect?

Indicator

c. Allocating resources in a manner designed to facilitate student achievement consistent with school district goals and plans.

Benchmarks

i) What is the board's process for evaluating progress on the strategic plan?
ii) How does the board ensure decisions are based on staff and community input, research, data and student information?
iii) How does the board promote community awareness of district financial information?
iv) How does the board ascertain what is necessary to enhance student achievement and how are resources aligned to meet these needs?

Indicator

d. Maintaining legislative awareness and communicating with members of local, state and federal legislative bodies.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board appointed a PSBA Legislative Representative to provide regular legislative updates?
ii) Does the board invite legislators to attend school board meetings and district activities?
iii) Do board members attend legislative informational opportunities such as PSBA Legislative Leadership Conference, PSBA county meetings, PSBA Legislative Action Network, and NSBA Federal Relations Network, and how is information from these sessions shared?

iv) What methods are used to interact with other local, state or federally elected officials to advocate positions on legislative issues?
v) To what extent is the board prepared for its role in legislative advocacy?

Indicator

e. Ensuring strong management of the school system by hiring, setting goals with and evaluating the superintendent.

Benchmarks

i) In what ways does the board proactively prepare for future changes in district leadership?
ii) What are the policies and procedures for selecting a superintendent whose qualifications and experiences match the needs of the district?
iii) How does the board collaborate with the superintendent to develop annual goals?
iv) What process does the board use for formal, annual evaluation of the superintendent?

Indicator

f. Employing qualified staff to meet student and program needs.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board ensure that hiring policies are legal, objective and followed by district administrators?
ii) How does the board determine staffing and program needs required to implement the strategic plan and promote student achievement?
iii) How does the board ensure that resources are allocated to meet staffing and program requirements?

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Standard

2. Models responsible governance and leadership by:

Indicator

a. Staying current with changing needs and requirements by reviewing educational literature, attending professional development opportunities prior to board service and continuously during board service, and preparing to make informed decisions.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board established an annual professional development plan for board members that encourages attendance at a minimum of five (5) training opportunities?
ii) Does the board provide opportunities for all new board members to attend orientation programs?
iii) How do board members share feedback about their professional development participation?

Indicator

b) Interacting with school officials in other districts and using resources provided by organizations and agencies committed to effective governance and management of public schools.

Benchmarks

i) How do board members network with school directors in other school districts?
ii) To what extent does the board maintain membership and utilize resources of professional organizations for board members, superintendents, administrators and solicitors?
iii) How does board members' engagement with others while attending professional development opportunities benefit the district?

Indicator

c. Leading with respect and taking full responsibility for board activity and behavior.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board adopted and disseminated to the public a policy that governs public participation at board meetings?
ii) How does the board ensure the confidentiality of information shared in executive session?
iii) Do individual board members refrain from making commitments on behalf of the entire board?
iv) How does the board measure and evaluate the effectiveness of board meetings?
v) How does the board measure and evaluate the public perception of the board's behavior and demeanor, and how do those perceptions help or hinder confidence in the board?

Indicator

d. Adopting and acting in accordance with the *PSBA Code of Conduct for Members of Pennsylvania School Boards*.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board adopted the *PSBA Code of Conduct for Members of Pennsylvania School Boards* and is it reaffirmed each January during School Director Recognition Month?
ii) How have components of the Code of Conduct been included in the annual board self-assessment?
iii) How is the Code of Conduct used in new board member orientation?

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Indicator

e. Engaging all community stakeholders.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board adopted policies and practices that engage community stakeholders?
ii) What community engagement methods are used to seek input?
iii) How does the board determine and prepare a designated spokesperson to accurately speak on behalf of the board?
iv) In what ways is the community encouraged to use existing facilities for community activities?

Indicator

f. Complying with board policy and all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board access and use information from PSBA, the school solicitor and other sources to remain compliant?
ii) What is the board's process to regularly review and update board policies to remain compliant?
iii) What is the board's process to understand and execute its role in policy development?

Indicator

g. Operating as a collective board in making decisions.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board encourage all members to actively participate in board discussions, deliberations and decisions?

ii) How do individual board members publicly support board decisions?
iii) How does the board ensure that individual board members do not act unilaterally on behalf of the board?
iv) What methods ensure that each board member will receive the same information to review, prior to making decisions?

Indicator

h. Participating in annual board retreats.

Benchmarks

i) Does the board schedule retreats?
ii) For what purposes are retreats used, i.e. teambuilding, goal-setting and board self-evaluation?
iii) How does the board use retreat outcomes throughout the following year?

Standard

3. Governs through policy by:

Indicator

a. Seeking input from stakeholders and following an established procedure for consideration.

Benchmarks

i) What process does the board follow for making all proposed policies available for public review?
ii) What procedures are in place for seeking input from and returning feedback to stakeholders regarding policy issues and implementation of adopted policies?
iii) How does the board integrate stakeholders' input into its policy discussions and deliberations?

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Indicator

b. Regularly reviewing and, as necessary, revising and adopting board policy.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board provide information and training to its members about the board's responsibility regarding policy?

ii) What process does the board use to ensure regular review and revision of existing policies and adoption of new policies? Is it working effectively?

iii) What sources provide pertinent background information, legal and expert advice, and proposed policy language for the board's consideration?

iv) How does the board ensure that each board member receives relevant policy information in a timely manner that allows him/her to make informed decisions at public meetings?

v) What mechanism does the board use to respond to specific situations, incidences, etc. that affect policy?

Indicator

c. Delegating to the superintendent responsibility for implementation of board policy.

Benchmarks

i) What procedures are established to generate reports to the board regarding implementation of policies by the administration?

ii) How does the board provide training about the board's and administration's division of roles for policy functions?

iii) Does the board evaluate the superintendent's effectiveness in implementing policy as one factor in the superintendent's annual evaluation?

iv) Does the board direct the superintendent to develop and report on administrative regulations to implement adopted policies?

v) Do individual board members refer to the superintendent all issues related to daily operation of the schools?

Indicator

d. Ensuring public access to adopted board policy.

Benchmarks

i) What is the procedure for distributing adopted policies to affected stakeholders?

ii) How does your district make adopted board policy available for public access?

iii) Does the district maintain up-to-date policies on the district's Web site?

Indicator

e. Purposefully linking its actions to applicable board policies.

Benchmarks

i) How do board members become and remain knowledgeable about board policy and its application to board actions?

ii) Is board policy available at all meetings in either print form or online?

iii) Does the board agenda reference action items to specific policies that are appropriate for such action?

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Standard

4. Ensures that effective planning occurs by:

Indicator

a. Adopting and implementing a collaborative strategic planning process, including regular reviews.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board identify and utilize steering committee members?
ii) How does the board consider stakeholders when developing, adopting and implementing the strategic plan?
iii) Has the board followed requirements of the State Board regulations when approving the strategic plan?
iv) What current educational research, emerging issues and legislative initiatives directed toward education should the board incorporate in the strategic planning process?
v) How often and in what ways does the board review and revise the strategic plan?

Indicator

b. Setting annual goals that are aligned with the strategic plan.

Benchmarks

i) What steps are taken to develop board goals that appropriately reflect and contribute to the implementation of the strategic plan?
ii) How are the superintendent's goals aligned with board goals?
iii) Do the superintendent's goals reflect priorities established in the strategic plan?
iv) How are goals used as a component of board and superintendent annual evaluations?

Indicator

c. Linking board actions to the strategic plan.

Benchmarks

i) Does the board promote and prominently display the adopted mission statement?
ii) Are all relevant board decisions made with thoughtful consideration of the strategic plan?
iii) How are board agenda items linked to relevant action plans?
iv) How does the board evaluate the effectiveness of board actions in relation to the implementation of the strategic plan?

Indicator

d. Adopting a financial plan that considers short-term and long-term needs.

Benchmarks

i) How are short-term and long-term needs identified, differentiated and prioritized?
ii) How does the board ensure that the superintendent's financial recommendations are aligned with the strategic plan and district goals?
iii) Are annual budgets and multiyear fiscal plans developed and publicized according to an established timeline?

Indicator

e. Adopting professional development plans for board and staff.

Benchmarks

i) Does the board promote professional development for board members and the staff?

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ii) Has the board established and implemented an annual professional development plan for board members?

iii) Does the board ensure committees are in place to develop and recommend required induction and professional education plans?

iv) How well does the professional development plan align with student achievement goals?

Indicator

f. Adopting a plan to ensure evaluation of student growth and achievement using relevant data.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board approved appropriate assessment tools to measure student achievement?

ii) How frequently are assessment results reported to the board?

iii) How do the board and superintendent use data from assessment results to initiate with the staff necessary modifications to the educational program?

Indicator

g. Adopting a master facilities plan conducive to teaching and learning.

Benchmarks

i) How does the board identify the long and short-term facilities needs of the district?

ii) How does the board involve the administration in identifying the appropriate educational environment to maximize student achievement?

iii) How does the board utilize financial planning to determine the impact of proposed needs?

Indicator

h. Adopting a plan for curriculum review and development.

Benchmarks

i) Does the board have a policy governing curriculum development and adoption?

ii) Has the board approved a cyclical plan for review of curriculum relative to academic standards?

iii) What criteria are used to determine resource allocation for curriculum development?

Standard

5. Monitors results by:

Indicator

a. Using data appropriately to make informed decisions.

Benchmarks

i) What training do board members receive on how to use data to make decisions?

ii) What steps are taken to ensure that the board understands assessment results?

iii) How do the board and superintendent determine what data is needed to make informed decisions?

iv) How does the board align data with local needs and state and federal requirements?

Indicator

b. Ensuring effective practices for evaluation of staff, programs, plans and services.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board adopted policies that govern evaluation of educational programs and staff?
ii) What varied strategies has the board approved for formative and summative evaluation of staff?
iii) Does the board establish and monitor timelines for meeting district goals and objectives?

Indicator

c. Evaluating its own performance.

Benchmarks

i) Does the board conduct an effective, annual self-evaluation?
ii) What sources of input does the board use to determine the board's effectiveness?
iii) Does the board perform self-audits throughout the year to determine the effectiveness of board meetings?

Indicator

d. Assessing student growth and achievement.

Benchmarks

i) What is the board's role in enhancing student achievement?
ii) What sources of input and data are used for formulating policies to improve student achievement?
iii) How does the board utilize this data to improve all district programs?

Indicator

e. Evaluating the effectiveness of the strategic plan.

Benchmarks

i) Does the board establish criteria to measure the achievement of the goals and objectives of the strategic plan?
ii) What is the board's process for conducting ongoing review and revision of the strategic plan?
iii) How does the board obtain feedback regarding the implementation of the strategic plan?

Standard

6. Communicates with and engages the community by:

Indicator

a. Distributing relevant information about the district.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board adopted policies aimed at effective community engagement?
ii) How does the board identify key communicator groups and how are these groups utilized to disseminate district information?
iii) What venues are used to promote the achievements of students?
iv) Do board members clearly understand the key messages the board is trying to convey?
v) How well trained is each board member on media relations?

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Indicator

b. Providing methods of communication to the board and appropriate staff.

Benchmarks

i) What policies has the board adopted to encourage and provide for communication between the board, staff and community?

ii) How have these policies been communicated to all interested parties?

iii) What forums are provided for community input to the staff and board?

Indicator

c. Seeking input through a variety of methods.

Benchmarks

i) How are adopted policies governing public participation at board meetings communicated to the public in addition to being available at board meetings?

ii) How does the board use established community advisory committees to provide input into its decision-making?

iii) How does the board and staff utilize the district Web site as a communication tool?

iv) Does the board use a survey tool to solicit input, as necessary?

v) How are constituent's view solicited to ensure that all views are represented?

Indicator

d. Including stakeholders in all communications.

Benchmarks

i) Has the board developed a plan to identify stakeholders and appropriate methods for communication with them?

ii) Has the board adopted policy for distribution of materials and information to appropriate stakeholders?

iii) Does the board have a process for presenting information about the school district to various community and civic organizations?

iv) Does the board communicate in a succinct manner that is understandable?

v) Do board meetings include an opportunity for students and staff to make presentations?